News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monthly News Release

OMAHA – Dry conditions persist across the Missouri River basin, dropping May's runoff to half of normal and raising the possibility of additional conservation measures.

"Lack of rain in many areas and little plains snowmelt are reasons for the low runoff. Our forecast above Sioux City for 2002 remains at 18.5 million acre feet (MAF), 73 percent of normal," said Larry Cieslik, Chief of the Missouri River Basin Water Management Division in Omaha. Annual runoff is normally 25.2 MAF.

"If the forecast verifies, Gavins Point releases will be cut an additional 2,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) in early July to conserve water in the reservoirs," said Cieslik. Flows are currently 4,000 cfs below full service navigation flows. The cut would drop them to minimum service in July. The season length will be the normal eight months, ending Dec. 1.

Mountain snowpack peaked in the reach above Fort Peck at 91 percent of normal on May 11. In the reach from Fort Peck to Garrison, it peaked at 85 percent of normal on April 22. "Runoff from the mountains is beginning to come into the reservoirs and will continue into early July," said Cieslik.

System storage ended the month at 47.8 MAF. Last year at this time it was 53.9 MAF. The amount of water in the reservoirs is nearly 12 MAF lower than normal, putting the three largest main stem lakes 11-18 feet below normal.

Releases from Gavins Point averaged 22,700 cfs during May, compared to a normal of 30,200 cfs. Lewis and Clark Lake will remain near 1206 feet above mean sea level (msl) during June.

Fort Randall releases averaged 20,600 cfs in May. They will range from 20,000 to 23,000 cfs in June as needed to maintain Lewis and Clark near its desired elevation. Lake Francis Case ended May at a record low elevation of 1349.8 feet msl. The lake is currently being refilled and will reach 1353 feet msl during the second week in June, and its target summer elevation of 1355 feet msl by the end of the month.

Lake Oahe dropped nearly one foot during May, ending the month at elevation 1595.3 feet msl. It will drop two feet during June, ending the month 15 feet below normal. The lake is 12 feet lower than last year at this time.

Garrison releases averaged 12,800 cfs during May. They were stepped up to 21,000 cfs beginning on May 25. Releases will be reduced 500 cfs in July and August, before dropping to 14,000 cfs in September. Lake Sakakawea ended May at 1828.3 feet msl. It will rise over two feet in June, ending the month 11 feet below normal. The lake is 3 feet lower than last year at this time.

Fort Peck releases averaged 7,300 cfs during May. They were increased to 9,000 cfs on May 17 and will remain at that rate through the summer. The lake ended the month at elevation 2218 feet msl. It will rise nearly two feet during June, ending the month almost 18 feet below normal. Last year at this time it was 4 feet higher.

The six main stem powerplants generated 562 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in May, 67 percent of normal. Given the forecasted inflow this year, energy production should be 7.2 billion kWh compared to a normal of 10.2 billion kWh.

Daily and forecasted reservoir and river information is available on the water management section of the Northwestern Division homepage at www.nwd.usace.army.mil**.**

MISSOURI RIVER MAIN STEM RESERVOIR DATA

	Pool Elevation (ft msl)		Water in Storage - 1,000 acre-feet		
	On May 31	Change in May	On May 31	% of 1967-2001 Average	Change in May
Fort Peck	2218.1	-0.7	11,941	77	-133
Garrison	1828.35	+0.8	15,450	84	+205
Oahe	1595.3	-0.9	15,368	79	-208
Big Bend	1418.2	-1.9	1,586	91	-108
Fort Randall	1349.8	-2.3	3,106	79	-181
Gavins Point	1205.8	-0.4	353	92	-9
			47,804	80	-434

WATER RELEASES AND ENERGY GENERATION FOR MAY

	Average Release in 1,000 cfs	Releases in 1,000 af	Generation in 1,000 MWh
Fort Peck	7.3	448	70
Garrison	12.8	787	107
Oahe	15.7	965	137
Big Bend	16.2	994	59
Fort Randall	20.6	1266	127
Gavins Point	22.7	1394	61
			562